

Remarks/Arguments

Claims 1-17, 20, and 23 – 29 are pending in the application.

In the outstanding Office Action, it was indicated that claim 3 would be allowable if rewritten in independent to include the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. This indication is noted with appreciation.

In the Office Action mailed November 23, 2007, claims 1, 2, 4 – 17, 20, and 23 – 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of U.S. Patent No. 3,899,136 to Harmony, U.S. Patent No. 5,330,107 to Karathanos, U.S. Patent No. 4,226,368 to Hunter, and U.S. Patent No. 4,909,441 to Christy.

By the above amendments, claim 1 has been amended to include the features of allowable claim 3, which has accordingly been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimed. Claims 23 – 29 have also been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Thus, Claim 1, the only independent claim remaining in this application, is in condition for allowance, while claims 2, 4 – 17 and 20, the only dependent claims remaining in the application, all depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, and thus should also be in condition for allowance for at least this reason.

Accordingly, all pending claims should now be in condition for allowance.

Applicant makes the above amendments without prejudice or disclaimer, and without assenting to the Examiner's characterization of the claims or ejections thereof. These amendments are made only to expedite prosecution of the application to allowance without incurring further expenses. Applicant reserves the right to pursue the full scope of the originally filed claims in all manners allowed by law, including through the filing of continuing applications, and through enforcement of the remaining claims.

CONCLUSION

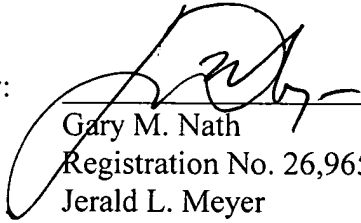
In light of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes the application is not in condition for allowance, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney if it is believed that such contact will expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,
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